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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews literature on teaching, learning, and change, focusing on change as a system for self-renewal and examining change in terms of long-term purposes, the risk of failure, self understanding, productive relationships, habits of thinking, and curiosity. The paper presents results from a synthesis of two qualitative case studies of veteran teachers, emphasizing the importance of change and innovation as a source of professional development and renewal throughout their careers. Much of their renewal was self-initiated and undertaken without support from administrators or their district. Discussion includes a possible explanation for self-initiated change, teachers as lifelong learners, learning with/from colleagues, factors that facilitate and/or hinder teachers' efforts to change, and suggestions for assisting veteran teachers in their search for self-renewal. (Contains 44 references.) (JDD)

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The Best Kept Secret . . . Self-Initiated Change: Veteran Teachers' Catalyst for Renewal

Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the
American Educational Research Association
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The Best Kept Secret . . . Self-Initiated Change: Veteran Teachers' Catalyst for Renewal

This paper presents results from a synthesis of three qualitative case studies of veteran teachers who emphasized the importance of change and innovation as a source of professional development and renewal throughout their careers. Much of their renewal was self-initiated and undertaken without support from administrators or their district. Discussion includes a possible explanation for self-initiated change, the kinds of activities undertaken, factors that facilitate and/or hinder teachers' efforts to change, and suggestions for assisting veteran teachers in their search for self-renewal.

Teaching, Learning, and Change

Few would deny that the 20th century has seen a rapid and unparalleled increase in the tempo of change. Education has not been immune to the ebb and flow of change: On the one hand, there has been a plethora of recent school reforms and restructuring proposals, as well as a burgeoning literature on organizational change; on the other hand, criticism of a school system that has not moved quickly enough to prepare students for life in the 21st century.

There is a popular perception that teachers resist change, but our research has uncovered a group of veteran teachers who have consistently initiated and pursued change throughout their careers as a means of self-renewal. Maintaining their own interests, challenging their creativity, and continuing to learn, these experienced teachers engage in self-renewal with little support from their administrators and districts. Self-renewing veteran teachers represent a group whose interests, concerns, and experiences are rarely reflected in the literature on change or teacher development (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992, p. 5) .

Dewey (1933/1960) and Gardner (1963/1981) underscored the important relationship between lifelong learning and change: Change is a necessary condition

for self-renewal; learning and flexibility an imperative for responsible adaptation to a constantly changing and uncertain world. The last decade has focused attention on teachers as necessary agents in change processes such as improving teacher education (e.g, Goodlad, 1990; Holmes Group, 1986), encouraging teacher development (e.g., Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992), and professionalizing teaching (e.g., Holmes Group, 1986; Lieberman, 1988; Lieberman, 1992). Recent research on "enquiring teachers" (Fosnot, 1989), "empowered" teachers (Maeroff, 1988), and teacher leaders (Wasley, 1991) recognizes individual teachers as active participants in change instead of passive recipients of the ideas of others, or worse, teachers dulled by the crushing dailyness and routines of "learning impoverished" schools (e.g., Goodlad, 1984; Rosenholtz, 1989; Sizer, 1984).

Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) have proffered a framework that is useful in understanding teacher development and educational change. The elements of the framework include the teacher's purpose, the teacher as a person, the context in which teachers work, and the culture of teaching, including collegial relationships and networks (p. 5). This paper will consider these four elements while addressing the following research questions:

1. Who are the teachers who embrace change and innovation?
2. Why do they seek out change/innovation/renewal?
3. What are some of the changes they have initiated and/or sought throughout their careers as teachers?
4. How have their attempts to change been facilitated or hindered?

5. What happens when curricular innovations or philosophical shifts are embraced more quickly by teachers than by their school district?

Conceptual Framework[1]

In his book, *Self-Renewal: The Individual and the Innovative Society,* Gardner (1963/1981) elaborates principles concerning the self-renewing individual. He details the attributes of persons intensely interested in the process of lifelong learning and provides a holistic explication of why such individuals seek out innovation and change. Gardner posits that self-renewing individuals devise a system or framework for continuous renewal that supports inquiry and complex decision making; courage to risk failure; self-knowledge; fruitful relations with other people; critical thinking; and a strong motivation to be involved in something about which they care deeply. These qualities will be discussed separately although together, they form a consistent whole, a way of thinking.

A system for change and renewal.

Gardner argues that the self-renewing individual has developed a maturing "system or framework within which continuous innovation, renewal and rebirth can occur" (p. 5). To describe this framework, Gardner uses the metaphor of a balanced ecological system where, within the same system, some things are being born at the same time that others are flourishing while still others are dying (p. 5). The same metaphor is used in *The Ecology of School Renewal* (Goodlad, 1987). The idea is also similar to three functions of teacher education outlined by Schlechty and Whitford (1983):

1. the *establishing* function (introduction of new programs, technologies, or procedures);

2. the *enhancement* function (expanding knowledge, enhancing performance capacities, refining existing skills);

3. the *maintenance* function (assuring compliance with routines, supporting preferred modes of operating, protecting from outside influence). (p. 77)

It seems then that self-renewal requires the first two processes, both involving change, to balance the third process which represents some kind of stasis or stability. It is the balance within the system or framework that represents growing maturity: One is not fearfully hanging on to the known and comfortable while refusing to change, but neither is one overwhelmed by innovations with no secure foundation. However, the metaphor also suggests that because individuals are part of much larger interrelated systems, they cannot be divorced from those contexts. That is, a certain amount of continuity is required for balance even as innovations are taking place. Gardner takes pains to explain that shared purposes of a society appear at first to be a maintenance function or major element of continuity, but that it is through constant reappraisal that they remain relevant and vital (p. 22).

Change and long-term purposes.

The self-renewing person also has a process of bringing the results of change into line with long-term purposes and values (Gardner, 1963/1981, p. 6). The process is a complex interweaving of continuity and change, conservation by innovation, stability in motion (p. 7). Gardner uses the example of a scientist who

may easily discard a theory but who will become angry if a favorite pipe is thrown out. The important point is that continuity and change exist side by side; continuity is only problematic when it interferes with renewal and innovation, when it prevents us from seeing fresh perspectives.

This is the same contradiction that Joyce (1984) describes in discussing the discomfort of learning. "The need to grow is built into the fiber of our being. . . . Paradoxically, however, we have an ingrained tendency to conserve our beings as they are or were" (p. 33). Real growth requires disequilibrium instead of comfort; problems and diverse opinions challenge fixed attitudes (p. 34). Another way of putting this is that the self-renewing individual, in continually looking for opportunities or new ways of identifying, thinking about, or solving problems, has developed a disposition for thinking and applying knowledge (Resnick & Klopfer, 1989, p. 7). The habit of seeking alternative solutions both prevents rigidity and a dependence on maintenance of the familiar or status quo, while it allows change to be systematic instead of a cacophony of fads. Thus "the self is not something ready-made, but something in continuous formation through choice of action" (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 351).

One way to cope purposefully with change and achieve some semblance of balance is to recognize that neither the individual's nor the organization's vitality and development can be left to chance; there must be systematic and continuous development with a framework of carefully examined values. If schools or school districts do not encourage a disposition for thinking and for applying knowledge, if

they do not establish a process for bringing change into line with long term values, it should not surprise us that non-renewing teachers and schools would resist change (e.g., Rosenholtz, 1989; Sarason, 1990). Refrains of "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" and "This too shall pass" are echoed by individuals and school systems that have blocked their capacity to renew and adapt to a world that does not stand still. They have put too little emphasis on developing dispositions and systems that facilitate change and too much emphasis on stability or maintenance. Such teachers and schools are being pushed and pulled to change, but have not established the cultures and dispositions that strengthen and enrich renewal.

Change and the risk of failure.

The self-renewing individual has the courage to risk failure in order to learn (Gardner, 1963/1981, p. 14). This represents as great a paradox as the need to grow and the desire to conserve. The paradox here is that learning requires individuals to risk failure even though they are schooled to see failure as a lack of learning.

Several other authors have noticed the important relationship between learning and the courage to risk failure. Bolin (1987) reminds us that renewal includes the idea of "growing afresh. . . . Associated with freshness and growth are change and repair. To change and repair, the teacher must, again, face risk. Without the risk of change, one may not be able to discover some new fresh thing or be able to renew a fight. . . . Such freshness is possible every time the teacher faces a new class of students, if the teacher recognizes that there is openness to knowledge and open possibilities in every relationship" (pp. 14-15).

Huebner (1987) expands this understanding of risk: "Teachers must act in an imperfect world. To postpone action until the knowledge and technique makers establish the educational millennium is sheer irresponsibility, based on illusions of progress. We have no choice but to risk ourselves. The choice is to consider the risk private or to build a community that accepts vulnerability and shares risks. Vulnerability is endurable in a community of care and support -- a community in which members take time telling and listening to the stories of each other's journey" (p. 26). Greene (1987), citing a literary essay by De Mott, again picks up the threads linking risk taking, vulnerability, human interactions, and renewal: "[W]riters (like the rest of us) have to feel forward -- live forward a little, risk more in the name of full human connection -- to become what they can become and to renew life for others" (p. 180).

Self-Understanding and change.

Gardner (1963/1981) notes that self-renewing individuals undertake a lifelong process of self-discovery and self-knowledge. They systematically seek to develop "the full range of [their] capacities for sensing, wondering, learning, understanding, loving and aspiring" (pp. 11-12). Gardner is not alone in linking self-knowledge to learning or development. In a review of the literature, Howey (1985) notes that one of the functions of staff development should be the understanding and discovery of self.

Productive relationships and change.

Another attribute already alluded to is the ability of self-renewing individuals to have "mutually fruitful relations" with other human beings (Gardner, 1963/1981, p. 15). They are able to accept and give love, have empathy for others, depend on others and be depended upon. Healthy social interactions enrich their lives. "Love and friendship dissolve the rigidities of the isolated self, force new perspectives, alter judgments and keep in working order the emotional substratum on which all profound comprehension of human affairs must rest" (p. 16).

Since teaching depends on human interactions, one might expect self-renewing teachers to exhibit high levels of fruitful relations with others. Indeed, the importance of genuine[2] collegial interactions are well documented in the literature, if not in practice. Collegial interaction has been linked to openness to change (Fullan, 1982; Poole & Okeafor, 1989), flexibility to cope with change and uncertainty (Heath, 1980), norms of continuous instructional and school improvement (Little, 1982), and good teaching and learning (Willie & Howey, 1980).

Willie and Howey (1980) expand this dimension to include "the need to understand the interaction of physiological, psychological, and social aspects in human development and the impact of that interaction upon one's self and the people one serves" (p. 27). They believe that "[t]he ability to experience open, supportive even tender relationships not only with students but also with colleagues . . . is essential to good teaching" (p. 38) and suspect that "reciprocity, self-disclosure, and mutual respect are essential ingredients in most authentic forms of

teaching and learning" (p. 38).[3] Heath (1980) contends that teachers who have a deep understanding of self and others, who "can create collaborative working relationships with other teachers and their students will create more adaptive ways of teaching tomorrow" (p. 297). Heath notes that such teachers "can also analyze objectively, accurately understand, care for, and respect the diversity of their students" (p. 297).

Change and habits of thinking.

Self-renewing individuals develop "habits of mind that will be useful in new situations -- curiosity, open-mindedness, objectivity, respect for evidence and the capacity to think critically" (Gardner, 1963/1981, p. 23). As early as 1963, Gardner was calling for education that would deepen understanding, strengthen performance, emphasize analysis, and encourage problem solving -- the habits of good thinking Dewey (1933/1960) embraced and the kind of learning that research in cognitive science supports (e.g., Gardner, 1991; Resnick & Klopfer, 1989). Jackson (1987), in discussing the phrase "learning to learn," also refers to dispositions and cognition.

> In cognitive terms, this means teaching a person to reason, to make judgments, to develop sustained arguments, to criticize the arguments of others, and so forth. . . . In terms more dispositional than cognitive, it means equipping the would-be learner with those attitudinal and emotional attributes . . . that predispose a person to the use of reason. These include a keen sense of curiosity, a high degree of intellectual honesty, self-confidence in one's ability to acquire knowledge, a healthy degree of skepticism when confronted with the knowledge claims of others, and so forth. . . . Taken together, these two components of learning to learn, the cognitive and the dispositional, add up to a readily recognizable intellectual posture. (p. 49)

Curiosity as motivation to change.

The final attribute of the self-renewing individual is the motivation to do "something about which he [sic] cares deeply" (Gardner, 1963/1981, p. 17). Green (1971) links motivation to wonder:

> When curiosity is rooted in a sense of wonder, then reflection and study become not tasks, but necessities -- as spontaneous and essential for life as breathing. . . . This is the consuming and pervasive motivation which teachers should aspire to in themselves and long for in their students. It will not be cultivated by devices or by frantic innovations. A change of curriculum is not the sufficient condition for it. Nor will it be accomplished by a more rigorous application of learning theory or by wearisome conferences and workshops. . . . The thirst for learning shall not be cultivated by a fearful and anxiety-ridden search for shortcuts. It shall begin to take form when we evidence patient and calm discovery of the wonders of this world and a corresponding capacity to marvel at them. (p. 202)

Dewey (1916/1966; 1933/1960) believed that motivation or interests must be channeled into habits of discipline and thinking, but that an attitude of curiosity or wonder is vital to the process. "Until we understand, we are, if we have curiosity, troubled, baffled, and hence moved to inquire" (1933/1960, p. 132). "Unless transition to an intellectual plane is effected, curiosity degenerates or evaporates" (p. 39). Curiosity also seems to play a vital role in creating "dynamic disequilibrium" (Joyce, 1984) and an openness to taking risks.

Although Dewey was interested in transforming occurrent interest into intrinsic interest or motivation, for decades after Dewey's work, motivation was studied separately from learning or cognition. It is only recently that cognitive researchers have focused on motivation and its direct implication in thinking (Resnick & Klopfer, 1989, p. 7). Reconceptualizing motivation as internal instead of

external has allowed us to move away from the more simplistic research on incentives and disincentives for workers and to think in more holistic terms that include challenging learning and meaningful social interactions in the workplace. Not only are learning and social interactions important to exemplary teachers (e.g., Campbell, 1988; Howey & Collinson, in press), but teachers in learning enriched schools engage in more collaborative relationships and try harder to improve student learning than their colleagues in learning impoverished schools (Rosenholtz, 1989).

Two Case Studies: Change as a Catalyst for Renewal

Many of the attributes of the self-renewing individual, as well as the quality of good judgment, were described in Dewey's (1933/1960) explication of how we think. One might say that these attributes portray a lifelong learner or educated person. The principles or dispositions of self-renewing individuals -- to continually seek to learn, to commit to something they care about, to seek interactions or relationships with others, and to be innovative, flexible, and creative -- are also noted consistently as characteristics of exemplary teachers. The same attributes appear again in the literature on teacher development and organizational climate (Collinson, forthcoming).

The remainder of this paper presents results from a synthesis of two qualitative case studies of veteran teachers who emphasized the importance of change and innovation as a source of professional development and renewal

throughout their careers (Collinson, forthcoming; Sherrill, 1993). Using case study methodology, these qualitative investigations explored (respectively) the personal and professional renewal of urban teachers nominated as exemplary by colleagues in their district and the clinical educator role during a pilot year of urban and suburban professional development schools.

As the participants in the two cases addressed the research questions framing their particular study, they articulated an unanticipated theme: These veteran teachers deliberately seek or initiate change as a source of renewal or continuous learning. If change, especially learning and innovation, has so energized and stimulated these teachers (indeed, is perceived to be vital to their professional well-being and success), then how they undertake professional revitalization merits closer attention.

Our current research begins to provide an understanding of veteran teachers' attempts to self-renew throughout their careers. The results suggest that individual teachers' dispositions toward change may provide valuable insight into ways that organizations can foster and encourage lifelong learning, openness to innovation, and challenging professional renewal opportunities for veteran teachers. There are also implications for rethinking the knowledge, skills, and experiences that teachers require both in formative and on-going professional education.

Teachers as Lifelong Learners

The participants in the case studies noted that their work ethic and disposition toward inquiry and risk-taking were acquired at a young age. These

teachers also established early patterns of extra-curricular involvement as students, and later, professional involvement as teachers. They are attuned to opportunities to learn, whether through their collegial networks, workshops, university courses, new programs, books, or the like. These are teachers who admit that they like to be on the cutting edge, that they rarely do anything the same way twice, and that they regularly experiment with pedagogical practices long before other teachers in their school attempt them.

In each of the studies, the participants have sought or initiated change through curricular innovations, grade and school transfers, professional involvement, collegial networks, graduate school, and new leadership roles. They consistently referred to these changes as a means of maintaining their own personal interest and creativity as well as improving classroom instruction. All believed that they could make a significant difference in the lives of their students.

The teachers leave no doubt about their top priority or purpose: They are constantly alert to innovations and ideas that will improve learning for their students. Nevertheless, the self-imposed mandate to "make it better for kids" goes far beyond pedagogical development to include self-knowledge:

> For a period of time, teaching writing was my only job, [but] it took until two weeks ago for me to feel as successful with it as I ever have. And I don't think I'm probably at the end of where I'm going with it *yet*! The children wrote better than I've ever had a group start a story, and this is [only] the beginning of the year!" So these kids are headed great places with this. But something different happens within *me* too.

What is equally intriguing is that several teachers were capable of and willing to self-evaluate and articulate what they have learned about themselves through their

teaching. In other words, teaching, for them, includes learning about themselves as well as about their students.

Learning with/from colleagues.

While the teachers use classroom time to learn about students and how children learn, there is also recognition that collegial interactions and new perspectives improve teachers' learning and subsequent teaching:

> . . . Because as adult teachers, we are going to learn from other adult teachers, you know. You can't close your mind down to that and say, "I'm just going to stay in [the classroom] with my children." You're playing nursemaid then, and that's not what we're all about. We have to be able to relate with *our* peers in order to keep growing.

Social interaction and collegial networking now play an important role in the participants' self-renewal; many of their ideas come from or are sparked by discussions with peers. Such was not always the case. There has been a broadening scope of professional interest and involvement that, over time, expanded from almost exclusive involvement in their classroom to participation at the school level, then in the district, state, national, or international community (Collinson, forthcoming). Said one teacher after being a clinical educator for a year, "You just begin to see things differently. You begin to see a little more of the picture, other than what's going on in your classroom." All agree that observing or working with peers allows them to appreciate new perspectives and provides ideas and/or support for risking further innovations.

Relating to peers was explained by several teachers as the opportunity to talk with peers about professional issues, new developments, and ideas. They value

occasions for articulating their beliefs about teaching and learning and making their practices explicit (also see Tatel, 1994). Several commented on the exhilaration they felt when, through reading recovery training or a mentor, they learned a new shared vocabulary to describe what they had been doing in practice for years.

Sharing a classroom and team teaching have also been powerful avenues for learning human relations, dependability, self and peer evaluation, conflict resolution, and diverse approaches to teaching. Several veteran teachers commented that they enjoy engaging in professional discussions with a group of colleagues and working with teachers across levels (elementary, middle, high school, and university), but that with few exceptions, they have had to initiate and pursue such professional growth on their own.

Factors that Facilitate or Hinder Teachers' Attempts to Change

Educational cultures and politics, scope of knowledge, shared beliefs and vocabulary, efficacy, and collegial respect all play important roles in the depth of individual teacher's professional involvement and contribution. Related to efficacy is the importance of knowing students well in order to teach them well, a part of teaching and learning to which some teachers devote a great deal of time and energy (Collinson, 1994). And, as noted earlier, collegial interactions around professional issues not only increase teacher satisfaction, they play a stimulating role in encouraging risk taking and innovation.

Once the teachers in these case studies had enjoyed fruitful collaborations and professional relationships, they were loath to work in schools or similar

environments that do not support such interactions. One clinical educator worried that after her term as clinical educator, she might leave the profession altogether if placed in a "learning impoverished" school (Rosenholtz, 1989) with few opportunities for professional growth. More experienced teachers, however, have resorted to other solutions in order to pursue collegial interactions. For example, after working in collaborative team teaching or open space schools and then moving to traditional schools without open space and teams, several of the participants forged successful teamwork and collaboration despite the physical walls in traditional schools. Others simply elected to transfer only to schools where collaboration and openness are norms (Collinson, forthcoming).

Teachers who have reached the level of professional expertise -- that is, those who are reflective, committed to educational improvement, and experienced in understanding the assumptions, beliefs, and values behind choices (Leithwood, 1990) -- have little time to waste on interference with their mission (also see Campbell, 1988):

> If the principal interfered with the teaching . . . . if you're not allowed to work with the children in a way that makes you feel like you're really truly doing something, then no, that's not teaching. . . . If I had no other teacher support, I *would* leave.

The perception of wasting one's potential by not being allowed to do one's best in teaching was a theme that was described in several different ways:

> I need to push myself for my own personal [sake], you know. I think the change [to a new position] would be good for me. I don't want to get into a routine. I don't want to waste myself and I want to be somewhere where I really feel I can make a difference.

The teachers also articulated a need to use knowledge to promote change beyond a single classroom in order to benefit other teachers. Even though informal diffusion occurs within teachers' personal networks of interested colleagues, the teachers recognize and are frustrated by the lack of support and avenues for broader dissemination of knowledge and opportunities for individualized professional development.

One study in particular found that the school structure (especially hierarchies and time constraints) greatly impeded teachers' ability to initiate change outside of their individual classrooms. Similar to the problems identified by Pink (1989), participants in the study lacked the time to plan for and learn new skills; received little, if any, central office or school support for their new role as clinical educators; and were unprepared to address the incompatibility of their new roles and the organizational structure of their workplace (Sherrill, 1993).

Blazing the Trail, But will Others Follow the Path?

Teachers who are innovators run the risk of feeling isolated as they embrace curricular innovations or philosophical shifts more quickly than their school districts and official leaders. This phenomenon can be problematic, but does not necessarily stop individual teachers from continuing to be pioneers. For example, three teachers continued to teach thematic units to their elementary students despite their district's emphasis on distinct subject areas. This was no arbitrary decision: It was based on years of experience of teaching young children; extensive, up-to-date graduate work; reading and conferences; and discussions of professional

practice with interested colleagues they have managed to locate, usually through involvement in various professional organizations or personal pursuits.

One teacher, following a university course on action research, used classroom inquiry to satisfy what she perceived as a lack of direction of teacher leadership and professional development in her district. In another district, a group of interested teachers compiled a list for the local university, suggesting ways to improve field experiences and student teaching for preservice teachers. The university response was that neither university schedules nor classroom space could be altered to allow for innovations. Another teacher with extensive leadership experience said, "Ideally, I'd like to teach English a half day and then spend the other half day setting up learning networks among language arts teachers throughout the system. I wrote a proposal in that regard, but nothing was ever done" (Sherrill, 1993). One of the most poignant remarks came from a very innovative, senior teacher:

> I think a principal encouraging people to stretch their wings, to fly a little bit higher than they did before, really makes a difference. I don't think I've ever had one who really wanted you to stretch your wings. I think sometimes they might have been afraid of what might happen if you would.

These teachers (perhaps because they work in large districts and are near a research institution) continue to pursue professional development and find ways to think and grow on their own initiative. However, we do not know how many "trail blazers" who could not find supportive colleagues may simply have left the profession for a career where their knowledge and thoughtful innovations were recognized and fostered.

Conclusion

Within the urban and suburban school districts represented in these case studies, there is a group of experienced teachers with a love of learning and the internal motivation to self-renew using every source they can find. The teachers who have been most successful and comfortable with influencing change beyond the personal level (i.e., in a leadership role) are those who have a broad understanding of educational issues thanks to an expanding scope of professional involvement or interest; who can articulate a set of coherent, cohesive beliefs about teaching and learning; and who have a history of collaboration with other teachers in various roles.

Their ability to change roles and extend their scope of renewal initiatives also seems to be enabled by experiences that strengthen their leadership skills such as communication, organizational, and human relations skills (Collinson, Hohenbrink, & Sherrill, 1994), as well as the kinds of skills acquired through prolonged collaboration with colleagues (Howey & Collinson, in press). However, our research indicates that too often the kinds of discussions, forums, and leadership opportunities desired by these veteran teachers have not been available to them. Thus, they sometimes feel as though they are operating in a vacuum and wonder whether their innovations are theoretically sound and shared by others.

The teachers voiced other concerns. First, finding colleagues with similar professional interests is difficult. Second, current teacher development programs do not allow or promote in-depth discussions over a prolonged period of time. Third,

formal and informal leadership training for teachers is sporadic or absent. Few of these teachers have enjoyed the "luxury" of a mentor or a principal with the knowledge and interest necessary to help them. We suggest establishing long-term cohorts of veteran teachers interested in discussing beliefs about teaching and learning, examining and/or conducting research to improve instructional practice, and collaborating with school or university colleagues.

Self-renewing teachers have the potential to help bridge school/university partnerships, assist in the preparation of future educators, and provide leadership for organizational change. However, because their districts have not identified them or assisted them with the kinds of development they would welcome, the organization lacks a strong base and leadership among teachers when implementing major systemic innovations.

NOTES

1. See Collinson (forthcoming) for an elaboration of this framework.

2. We are using the term "genuine" to distinguish collegial relationships that are self-initiated or willingly embraced rather than the "contrived collegiality" (Grimmett & Crehan, 1992; Hargreaves & Dawe, 1990) and "congenial" relationships (Little & McLaughlin, 1993) which "seem less likely . . . to account for high rates of innovation or for high levels of collective commitment to specific curricular or instructional policies. They seem less likely to force teachers' collective confrontation with the school's fundamental purposes or with the implications of the pattern or practices that have accumulated over time" (p. 30).

3. Approaching this hypothesis from another angle, Rosenholtz and Smylie (1984) underscored the importance of fruitful relationships to teaching and learning: that is, the greater the isolation of teachers, the lower their teaching skills were found to be.

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